United Nations A/56/PV.27

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

27th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 16 October 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Sharma (Nepal), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

The Acting President: I would like to remind members to make sure that at least one member of each delegation is in the General Assembly Hall by 10 a.m. sharp so that we can proceed with our very important meetings right on time, without losing our valuable time and opportunity. I thank members for their kind cooperation, and I hope that we will be able to meet on time, as the President has always insisted on doing. It is our own time, and it is to our own credit to meet as scheduled.

Agenda item 11 (*continued*)

Report of the Security Council (A/56/2)

Mr. Mejdoub (Tunisia) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like at the outset to thank the President of the Security Council for the month of October, the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ireland, Mr. Richard Ryan, for his exhaustive presentation of the report of the Security Council, which is submitted to the General Assembly under the provisions of the Charter. Tunisia would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate once again the Syrian Arab Republic, Guinea, Cameroon, Mexico and Bulgaria on their election as non-permanent members of the Security Council. We are certain that these countries will not fail to contribute constructively to the work of the Council. Allow me also to congratulate us all on the Nobel Peace Prize that was awarded this year to our Organization and the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan.

The examination of the report of the Security Council has always been the main mechanism at the General Assembly's disposal, under the provisions of the Charter, to assess the activity of the Security Council throughout the period covered in the report. This mechanism also enables the General Assembly to identify the measures that should be taken in order to make the necessary improvements to the working methods of that body in a way that faithfully follows the letter and the spirit of the Charter and also meets the expectations of the Member States of the Organization.

The annual debate on the report is also an opportunity of which I think the Security Council should fully avail itself, by making concrete use of the innovative and constructive ideas that emerge in the course of this debate in order to enhance its effectiveness and credibility and to lend tangible form to its interaction with the General Assembly.

In this regard, my delegation takes note of the sustained efforts of the Council to improve its performance in carrying out its mandate in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security. This trend, which we support and encourage, consists in the following points.

The first is the enshrinement of the broadened concept of the maintenance of international peace and security, which now goes beyond traditional

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-58132 (E)

peacekeeping operations to include conflict prevention and peace-building. This approach is expressed in several presidential statements and resolutions of the Council that contain measures and specific recommendations to this end. Our Organization should from now on think in terms of prevention to head off conflict and spare human lives, not to mention the financial aspects. The Council shows a trend to hold brainstorming sessions, which can improve the work of prevention. This is certainly a step forward.

Second is effective cooperation with all of the concerned parties — those who are part of the United Nations family as well as those outside this system, in particular regional organizations. We welcome and encourage this approach.

Third is more effective concentration on the conflicts in Africa and broadening the scope of their consideration by covering the general geopolitical framework of a given conflict rather than focusing attention exclusively on the country involved in conflict. This approach has been demonstrated specifically in the way the Council approached the situation in the countries of West Africa.

Fourth is the improvement in the concept of the sanctions regime so as to ensure that the goals at which the sanctions are aimed are obtained, while not harming the interests of third States and the populations of the countries hit by the sanctions. This tendency has been widely established in the sanctions regimes imposed on Ethiopia, Eritrea and Liberia, but not yet in respect of other countries; I shall return to this question.

The conclusion we have reached in reviewing this positive evolution is that the Security Council has effectively shown its capacity and its readiness — provided that it has the necessary political will — to react favourably and concretely to the ideas expressed by Member States of the Organization, which are capable of further enhancing its credibility.

We think that that constructive trend should be encouraged and promoted to ensure that the Security Council can play its central role of tackling all international peace and security matters on an equal footing. In that regard, my delegation would like to make the following points.

First, the Security Council must devote the necessary attention to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem. The Council's responsibility remains vital; there is no alternative to it.

Secondly, my delegation also believes that the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security requires it to deal properly with the issue of Somalia, which remains practically absent from the Council's agenda, despite the obvious dangers posed by the continued lack of basic State structures in Somalia. Let us not forget that the Council's inappropriate handling of the situation in Afghanistan has led to that hitherto almost forgotten conflict taking on uncontrollable international dimensions and giving rise to a new type of political turmoil that requires a new approach by the Security Council to all hotbeds of tension, as well as new methods to deal with them.

Thirdly, on the issue of sanctions, my delegation — like many other delegations — regrets that the Security Council did not adopt the recommendations of the Working Group it established to deal with this issue. My delegation underscores once again the need for the Council to agree on the measures necessary for harmonizing sanctions regimes by establishing general rules identifying the criteria for the lifting of sanctions; specifying mechanisms the Council can use to assess the degree of implementation of the objectives intended to be attained by the sanctions; establishing time limits for sanctions and defining specific criteria for the renewal of sanctions; activating the provisions of Article 50 of the Charter of the United Nations; and, lastly, putting in place appropriate measures to prevent negative effects of sanctions from affecting civilian populations.

With regard to the Council's working methods, we noted with satisfaction the growing improvement in this regard, which has made the Council's work more transparent. That improvement can be clearly seen in the growing number of open meetings held by the Council, as well as in the closed meetings held pursuant to Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter. This improvement can also be seen in the strengthening of cooperation between the Council and troop-contributing countries, in the adoption of resolution 1353 (2001) of 13 June 2001, and in the private meetings held between the Council and troop-contributing countries in accordance with this resolution.

We have also noted a desire by the Council to improve its understanding of the situations it deals with by sending special missions to the field and by carrying out direct dialogues at the highest level with parties to conflicts. These measures have had a positive impact on the substance of the Council's decisions, which now respond better to the demands of the situations under its consideration.

The Security Council has also made sure that it keeps Member States informed through briefings given by Presidents about informal consultations.

Moreover, we have noted that some members of the Council have recently begun a trend whereby open meetings are held at the end of their presidency to assess the work of the Council. We note this new trend with satisfaction, because we believe that it contributes to greater transparency. We also believe that it is possible to further develop that practice so as to ensure we have a true mechanism for interaction between the Council and the other Member States of the Organization.

We have also not failed to notice the Council's efforts to strengthen interaction with the General Assembly by delegating some of its members to participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly Working Group dealing with the issue of Security Council reform. Given the Council's evolving and essential role on the international scene, we think that this practice also needs to be further developed and institutionalized, as it can be beneficial to Council reform and to enhancing its effectiveness, transparency and credibility.

Reforming the Security Council's working methods is not an end in itself. The ultimate goal of that reform is to strengthen the Council's capacity to properly carry out its responsibilities, given that all its decisions have direct and immediate effect not only on Member States, but also on individuals in every region of the world. The sole purpose of the interaction between the Council and the General Assembly that we are calling for is to ensure that the Council fulfils the hopes and aspirations of the international community and firmly establishes the foundations of an international legality that binds us all and to which all of us can turn in times of both war and peace.

We have all taken note of the Council's initiatives in that regard, and of its willingness to improve its working methods, including those concerned with the content and structure of its annual report to the General Assembly. In this context, we would like to highlight the great importance we attach to the work of the Security Council Working Group on Documentation and Procedures. We would like to take this opportunity to call on the Group to take into account the views expressed by Member States in this debate, as well as the ideas expressed in the General Assembly's Working Group on Security Council reform.

We have no intention of repeating yet again the criticisms made during this debate with regard to the format and contents of the Council's annual report, which, despite the importance given to it in the Charter, does not meet its intended objective of providing Member States with the information necessary to evaluate the Council's work. Criticism in that regard has already been made, and we are not going to repeat it. Those shortcomings must be rectified.

Worthwhile efforts have been made in recent months to deal with problems in order to strengthen our trust in the Council. Various ideas have been mentioned, such as transparency, which cannot be avoided in today's world, but also new notions, such as accountability and follow-up with regard to implementation of the Council's decisions. Those efforts should be encouraged, because they will give our Organization greater authority and credibility — and, indeed, a greater degree of democracy. I very much hope that when we next consider this item we shall have encouraging answers.

In conclusion, I would like to refer to the fact that Ambassador Ryan, in introducing the report of the Security Council, emphasized that the members of the Security Council will consider all suggestions made during this debate. I reaffirm my country's commitment to work during the remainder of our term as a non-permanent member of the Council to promote the constructive ideas that emerge from today's debate. My delegation looks forward to coordinating its efforts in this area with the other members of the Security Council as well as with the rest of the membership of the Organization.

Mr. Alcalay (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): I join earlier speakers in congratulating the Secretary-General on being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, which also went to the United Nations Organization itself. The award is an encouragement for us to continue to work to build a world of peace and security,

particularly at this time when the impact of the terrorist acts of 11 September have generated such immediate solidarity in the international community in the struggle against the scourge of terrorism. In this context, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Security Council for its very swift response on the morning of 12 September, followed by the General Assembly the same day, with the unanimous adoption of a resolution by each body.

Venezuela considers the report of the Security Council to be extremely important, not only because the Council is a main organ of the United Nations, but because of the high expectations that have arisen in connection with the proposed changes aimed at ensuring a more analytical approach, which would certainly help to improve the content of the report.

The delegation of Venezuela thanks the Secretariat for its preparation of the most recent report, which details the Security Council's work over the past year in a comprehensive and in-depth way; a great effort has been made in this respect.

My delegation, however, would like to share some thoughts on the content of the report as they relate to two areas.

First, with regard to the content itself, the great deal of space devoted to discussions in the Council on items such as Africa, the Middle East, the question of Palestine, East Timor, Iraq and the Balkans shows the continued importance of such issues.

Another significant aspect is reform of the Council. The report shows that there is a continuing tendency for meetings to take place behind closed doors, which my delegation believes runs counter to the need to adopt democratic and transparent working methods. That need flows from the demands of the Millennium Declaration, together with reaffirmation of the right of all States to participate, members and non-members of the Security Council alike.

As for the Council's agenda, other important issues — including those of children and armed conflict; HIV/AIDS and peacekeeping operations; and women, peace and security — have become increasingly relevant. The Council, however, should consider such items in connection with their implications for its particular area of competence, namely, international peace and security.

The other area on which we would like to comment relates specifically to methodology, in particular the way in which information is handled and presented. My delegation would like to emphasize that, despite the major effort that has been made in preparing the report, we have still not seen the results, or the more dynamic relationship, that we had hoped for. This is particularly important given that today, more than ever, we must continue to effect a change in the international political, economic and social order so that we can focus more closely on resolving the most serious problems, in accordance with the objectives set out during the Millennium Summit of heads of State or Government, which took place last year here in New York.

We hope that the Security Council will in future be able to prepare its reports in a more analytical and constructive manner, so as to reflect the general orientation of its work. That would enable us to form a precise picture of its activities, and of its vision for the future, as they relate to the development of issues relating to international peace and security and their bearing on the general situation in international relations, which is the fundamental *raison d'etre* of our international Organization.

We are sure that considerable difficulties remain with this analytical approach. Nonetheless, we are aware that there is a desire to improve the preparation and presentation of the report, as evidenced by the work of the Security Council Working Group on Documentation and Procedures. We are sure that that work will soon yield results.

I would like to highlight the establishment of the counter-terrorism Committee, established under resolution 1373 (2001). This will provide an opportunity for the Security Council not only to bring the various countries of the United Nations together to combat terrorism, but to ensure a positive, effective, open and fluid interaction with all Member States with a view to building peace in the world.

In conclusion, we congratulate the representatives of Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic on their election as members of the Security Council. We are confident that their efforts will contribute further to the work being undertaken by the current members of the Council.

Mr. Kuchinsky (Ukraine): I should like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador

Richard Ryan, President of the Security Council for the current month, for presenting the annual report on the work of that organ for the period 16 June 2000 to 15 June 2001.

Let me also congratulate the representatives of Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria on the recent election of their countries to serve as non-permanent members of the Security Council starting on 1 January 2002. My delegation would like to wish these countries every success in discharging their very important responsibilities.

It is true that the record of the Council is always mixed; there are, of course, successes and there are failures. The 12-month period covered in the report was no exception to this rule, and the General Assembly's evaluation of the work of the Council should adequately acknowledge both.

I cannot agree more with what was said yesterday by Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore about the shift in political power within the United Nations family. Indeed, the sweeping changes on the world political scene of the last 10 years have led to the strengthening and the expansion of the powers of the Security Council, thus making it — in contrast to the previous decade — the most dominant and influential body, whose activities effectively shape international relations.

These changes have brought about increasing demands from the international community for the reform of the Security Council. Ukraine remains realistic about the fact that the comprehensive transformation of the Council and its activities is not an easy endeavour. Slow progress in the working group of the General Assembly on Security Council reform has decreased our enthusiasm and expectations for quick results. Still, the Council, conservative as it is, cannot stay away from the ongoing transformation processes of our Organization, and we have to admit that it is gradually — albeit not always consistently — changing the way it acts. There is, I believe, growing recognition, including within the Security Council, that reforms are indeed indispensable if the Council wants to respond to the demands of the times.

During the period under review, the Council effectively continued applying to its work all the good traditions and innovative approaches of past years, thus strengthening and building on the trend towards greater transparency and better working methods. This is especially important in view of the close link between the accountability and the transparency of the Council. We note the increasing recourse to open meetings and the growing participation of non-members of the Council in the consideration by the Security Council of a large number of issues on its agenda. Of course, much remains to be done in this area, and we are still far from the desired results. We have seen a number of innovative proposals in this respect, and we hope that the Council will constructively consider these initiatives.

I would also like to take this opportunity to offer my delegation's full support for the proposals put forward by Singapore to improve the contents and the format of the Council's annual reports. We look forward to the forthcoming discussions in the Council's Working Group on Documentation and Procedures and we are ready to make Ukraine's contribution to that consideration..

It is important to recognize visible progress in the area of the reform of United Nations peacekeeping mechanisms. In the view of my delegation, close cooperation between troop-contributing countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat is one of the major factors in conducting peacekeeping operations, at all stages, in the most effective manner. Against this background, we are satisfied with the real progress that was achieved in this field last year following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1327 (2000) and General Assembly resolution 55/135, both of which endorsed the recommendations of the Brahimi report, as well as the adoption of Security Council resolution 1353 (2001) this year.

At the same time, we agree that the new arrangements formalized in these resolutions are far from being exhaustive. In this regard, we expect that more will be done to find ways to improve the triangle of cooperation between the Secretariat, troop contributors and the Security Council.

In recent years, issues related to sanctions became the focus of attention of the international community and various United Nations organs. We note with satisfaction the effective expansion of the United Nations geography in consideration of various aspects of this issue, which continue to be addressed by an increasing number of United Nations bodies. I have to mention visible improvements in the Security Council policy in this area in past years.

Sanctions, however, will and must remain a necessary and important policy instrument in the hands of the Security Council. It is therefore of utmost importance that the Council apply a clear and coherent methodology for the imposition, application and lifting of measures under Chapter VII. In this connection, I wish to welcome the work done by the working group of the Security Council on general issues relating to sanctions, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Chowdhury of Bangladesh, which successfully endeavoured to elaborate such a methodology. The adoption and the effective implementation of its results should remain among the priorities of the Council's activities for the near future.

I welcome the intensified dialogue with regional and subregional organizations. It is a promising development. Regional action could not only ease the burden of the Council, but could also contribute to a deeper sense of general responsibility for the planet's present future, as well as to further democratization of international affairs.

In this context, we are satisfied that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations has reached very high levels. In particular, we could refer to the examples of such cooperation in resolving the conflicts on the territory of the former Yugoslavia and in West Africa.

There are many other domains and dimensions pressing for urgent change.

The tragic course of events in the Middle East in the past year required the consistent attention of the Council. However, the effectiveness of the Council's reaction to the situation was once again undermined by its inability to act and put a stop to the ongoing violence and bloodshed in the Palestinian territory and in Israel and bring the parties back to the negotiating table.

This May the Council started reviewing its policy towards Iraq, trying to find a way out of the impasse, which characterizes the Council's decade-long consideration of this issue. We continue to believe that the necessary preconditions for Iraqi cooperation with the Council and the resolution of the Iraqi issue can and should be found outside the tightening of the sanctions regime, which has resulted in more than 10 years of suffering by the Iraqi people. We also emphasize that continuation of the dialogue between the Secretary-General and the Government of Iraq will serve effectively to achieve this goal.

The continuing crisis in the Balkans is another example of the crucial current difficulties faced by the Security Council itself. The permanent attention to the situations in Kosovo, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in Prevlaka, has already given not only the necessary political message to the players in the Balkans arena but has also given an extremely important impetus to the democratic and stabilizing developments in that region. At the same time, the remaining problems demonstrate that the situation in the Balkans cannot be improved simply by paperwork, statements or declarations. The results of the activities of the Security Council over the period under discussion strengthen our belief that the successful resolution of the crisis in the region can be reached through a well-targeted regional peace-strengthening strategy, which has to be elaborated by the Council in close cooperation with regional organizations, first and foremost the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

During the reporting period, the Council successfully sustained the encouraging trend of the past couple years by making a major shift in its overall policy towards Africa and continued to be actively involved in responding to the conflict situations on the continent, for the lack of which it had been widely criticized not long ago. A significant contribution to this crucial task was made by the Security Council summit held on 7 September 2000. The presidential statement adopted at that meeting became an important contribution towards the development of a well-targeted strategy and shared vision in the maintenance of international peace and security on the continent and beyond, and of the deeper and broader involvement of Member States and the wider international community in this regard.

The follow-up actions of the Council were evidence of its willingness to translate the commitments made at its summit into practical results and an expression of the Council's determination to intensify efforts to this end. The major developments in this area have been marked by the increase of the United Nations peacekeeping presence in Sierra Leone, which every day gives more grounds for optimism; steady progress in the peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, assisted by the United Nations Mission; positive dynamics in the implementation of the Lusaka

Ceasefire Agreement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which continues to receive the most active support of the Council; and the continuation of an active involvement by the Council in the peace consolidation efforts in Angola. The Council kept monitoring closely the developments in the peace-building efforts of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic, and the restoration of stability and State institutions in Somalia.

With certain important progress having been made by the Security Council with regard to addressing some of the crises in Africa, it is important that this progress be followed by renewed commitments and the political will of the parties concerned to implement peace agreements and to work towards achieving sustainable peace.

By offering these remarks, my intention was to emphasize that the Security Council has a special role to play in establishing a new pattern of international cooperation as we enter a new era with new challenges.

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): First, I should like to express our thanks to Ambassador Ryan, President of the Security Council for the month of October, for his introduction of the Council's annual report to the Assembly. Submitted under Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, this report serves as the most important link between the two bodies — the General Assembly, where 189 sovereign States are represented, and the Security Council, which is entrusted by the Member States with the crucial responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The report enables Member States to give their impressions on the work of the Council and review its effectiveness. For these reasons, we continue to attach importance to the present mechanism of annual reporting by the Council.

Although there are various other formats that the Council has devised over the years to inform the General Assembly membership of its important activities, the annual report remains the most useful package of information for the majority of States, particularly those States with limited human resources, regarding the wide-ranging activities of the Organization.

Before going to the substance of the report, I wish to make some observations on the format of the report and the efforts of the Council to strengthen its effectiveness. The report of the Council, as it is structured, is a comprehensive document containing many details. Despite the efforts by the Security Council to make it more analytical, we regard this as an area that needs further strengthening. It is in this regard that we share the views so eloquently put forward by Ambassador Mahbubani. The Members need more information on the thinking and the analysis behind the consideration of peace and security issues of which the Council remains seized. How the Security Council perceived these issues is more significant and valuable to us other Members than the description of the events in chronological order. We do attach some value to the facts and information provided by the report. However, we strongly wish to be informed of the conceptual reasoning that surrounded the consideration of each issue before the Council.

In this regard, we are encouraged that the report continues to provide us with the assessment of the work of the Council by its Presidents during their respective presidencies. Though these assessments are no substitute for a more analytical report of the Council, they give us information that helps us understand clearly how issues before the Council evolved and how the Council reacted to the unfolding developments concerning them. It is also from these presidential assessments that we are informed about the useful visits to the regions of concern by high-level United Nations officials and the considered views they share with the Council as to the further steps needed. We are grateful for these assessments, which make the work of the Council more transparent.

In this connection, the idea of monthly public wrap-up discussions on the work of the Security Council is a useful initiative. We strongly believe that this process enhances the effectiveness of the Council in the long run. My delegation would like to express its support for the Council's initiatives, through these wrap-up discussions, to bring more transparency and openness to its work.

The Council's openness and transparency in its work can only strengthen its credibility, as well as its efficiency and effectiveness. The involvement of all concerned in the consideration of peacekeeping operations also enhances the Council's commitment to transparency. We are therefore grateful to observe the steps taken by the Council to strengthen cooperation between the troop-contributing countries, on the one hand, and the Security Council and the Secretariat, on the other. These steps, by promoting a transparent

relationship between the three actors, will foster a new spirit of partnership, cooperation and confidence. In this context, we believe that the unanimous adoption of Council resolution 1353 (2001) will further strengthen the partnership.

The effectiveness of the Council depends in large measure on the implementation of its relevant resolutions in conflict situations. The implementation process encompasses many key actors, such as various United Nations agencies, those on the ground and relevant communities of the country or the region concerned. The successful implementation of a Council resolution clearly needs the full support of these key actors. The Council's initiative to enlist the support of the key actors through its missions to conflict areas is commendable. We believe that such high-level missions will send a clear message to all concerned that it is the strong wish of the international community to see the issues resolved.

Concerning the substantive side of the report, we find that the Council remains seized with many conflict situations and crises. Due to the lack of political will of the parties concerned, long-standing problems remain on its agenda. In this regard, the Council's continued efforts to focus on specific issues that have a negative bearing on a conflict situation need to be encouraged and maintained. We are pleased to observe that the Council, in the period under consideration, engaged in debates on very relevant issues, such as women, peace and security; HIV/AIDS; the protection of civilians in armed conflict; and children in armed conflict. We believe that these thematic discussions will contribute to strengthening the Council's effectiveness.

With regard to peacekeeping operations, we are heartened that the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305) has been comprehensively reviewed by the Working Group established by the Security Council. Security Council resolution 1327 (2000), adopted in response to the report of the Panel, contains useful recommendations submitted by the Working Group. We ardently hope that the recommendations will go a long way towards effecting needed changes in the peacekeeping operations of the Organization.

Let me now make a few comments on the issue of sanctions. When the framers of the Charter of the United Nations considered sanction provisions for inclusion in the Charter, they had the best of intentions and the noblest of thoughts in making sanctions regimes a primary tool of peace enforcement. At the same time, resort to sanctions regimes under Article 41 of the Charter, be they comprehensive or otherwise, has never been an easy task. The simple reason is that a sanctions regime has unintended negative and collateral impact.

Primarily due to the severe impact of sanctions, it has been accepted that sanctions should be a last-resort tool in peace enforcement. We are encouraged that many reviews of sanctions regimes have been conducted both within and outside the United Nations system to make them a more effective tool, rather than a blunt instrument. Despite these reviews, there has been a general feeling that improvements are still needed in the way sanctions are being applied. Questions still linger as to how long a sanctions regime should stay and what and who could objectively determine that a country concerned has complied with the demands of the international community. We strongly feel that the lifting of a sanctions regime, especially a comprehensive one, should be governed by objective considerations.

In this regard, we are pleased to observe that the Security Council established a Working Group to develop general recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of sanctions. At the same time, while we recognize the progress made in the Working Group, we are discouraged that major aspects of the sanctions issue, such as time limits for and the lifting of sanctions, remain outstanding. Given its importance, we wish to urge that further steps be taken to make progress in this respect.

Before concluding, I wish to convey our warmest congratulations to the five newly elected members of the Council: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria. We are confident that they will be able to contribute to the successful implementation of the Council's primary functions. On our part, Myanmar is ready to cooperate with them, as well as with other members, in the discharge of their heavy responsibilities.

Mrs. Menéndez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me, first and foremost, to congratulate the five newly elected members of the Security Council — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria — which will begin their mandate on 1 January 2002.

Furthermore, I would like to thank Ambassador Ryan, the President of the Council for the month of October, for his introductory remarks on the report of the Security Council, contained in document A/56/2.

The format of the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly has been the subject of debate for several years in the Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on Security Council reform. Many delegations, including mine, have asked for a report that is less voluminous, more user friendly, more analytical and more transparent. Paradoxical as it may sound, despite the increase in the number of pages and items in the report, the part devoted to the so-called informal consultations of the whole is scant and reveals little of what happens at those meetings, which, one should never forget, remain very frequent.

It is undeniable that remarkable progress has been made in the improvement of the Security Council's working methods and transparency in recent times. Suffice it to mention the increase in the number of public meetings open to the participation of non-members of the Council that wish to take part, or the innovative practice introduced by some Council members of holding wrap-up sessions at the end of their monthly presidencies — a practice that we welcome, while encouraging all Council members to follow suit.

Another very positive aspect that should be highlighted is the very interesting meeting held by the General Assembly's Working Group on Security Council reform on 13 June, when several Ambassadors representing Council members came to the Working Group to exchange views with delegations. The exchange was very instructive and was a clear example of the kind of interaction between the General Assembly and the Security Council that, in our view, must be pursued. The exchange of views with representatives of the Secretariat held in the same Working Group last July, on Secretariat procedures for taking and retaining notes of so-called informal consultations, was also extremely useful.

Nonetheless, the reality for the Security Council is that closed meetings — informal consultations of the whole — or semi-closed meetings — so-called private meetings — continue to be the general rule. My delegation has consistently held the view that informal consultations should be held only when there is real need for that format. As to private meetings, we think there is some confusion about them; this arises mainly from a lack of uniform criteria for attendance by non-members of the Council, that is, whether all non-members can attend those meetings if they wish, or only those specially interested and/or affected — or even none. This issue should be clarified. We know that the Security Council Working Group on Documentation and Procedures has considered the issue. Unfortunately, the Working Group has seldom met during the reporting period.

Speaking of the Working Group on Documentation and Procedures, my delegation suggested during the last session of the Assembly's Working Group on Security Council reform that some very informal link be established between the Assembly's Working Group on reform and Council's Working Group on Documentation and Procedures. This could enhance the consideration of all these matters related to the Council's working methods. It would not be a futile exercise: we remain convinced that further improvement in the Security Council's working methods and transparency will lead to a more effective Council.

A key issue in this regard is the relationship between the Security Council and troop-contributing countries. My delegation welcomes the adoption last June of Security Council resolution 1353 (2001), on strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries. That resolution is an important step forward, and we trust that its implementation will contribute to improving the peacekeeping activities of the United Nations system.

By the same token, we hope that the assessment of measures adopted by the Council, which the Council has committed itself to undertake within six months of adoption, in the framework of its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, will help us make progress towards the establishment of an appropriate mechanism that will make it possible for troop-contributing countries to participate in a meaningful way in the process of taking decisions that affect them, it being understood, of course, that final decision-making is the exclusive province of the Council.

Mr. Pradhan (Bhutan): First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, the current President of the Security Council, for introducing the report of the Council to the General Assembly (A/56/2). I would also like to take this

opportunity to congratulate Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic on their election to membership of the Security Council and to wish them well as they begin to shoulder their important responsibilities.

It is clear from the report of the Security Council that during the year under review the Council dealt with a wide range of complex international issues in Africa, Asia and Europe. Some of these were the intractable problems of the Middle East, Africa and the Balkans. The continent of Africa figured prominently in the activities of the Council, relating to Eritrea and Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Angola, the Great Lakes region, Rwanda and the Central African Republic, to mention some of them. The Council continued to face a deadlock in Cyprus. As far as Afghanistan is concerned, events have taken a completely different turn after the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States and the military operations launched in Afghanistan against terrorist bases.

Despite the many cases where progress was elusive, the work of the United Nations resulted in successful elections in East Timor. We expect that new international entity soon to join the ranks of sovereign countries here at the United Nations.

Among the Security Council's initiatives was that related to HIV/AIDS and its implications for international ; acekeeping operations, an issue that indeed needed the highest attention.

One of our greatest concerns when it comes to conflicts is the use of children as soldiers. The attention given by the Security Council and by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to this great humanitarian concern is highly gratifying.

The primary responsibility of the Security Council is to maintain international peace and security. However, as human history has demonstrated, that is no easy task in a world that has yet to renounce violence as a means of dispute settlement. We join the Secretary-General in urging the international community to move from a culture of reaction to one of prevention.

While we are aware that conflict prevention is no easy task, it is a task that must be pursued. Hence, the Security Council has to have its ear constantly to the ground and analyse the flow of information to ascertain possible conflicts that could occur. The Security Council must strengthen its capabilities in conflict prevention.

In that context, international arms embargoes to areas of conflict or potential conflict are an important tool that the Security Council can utilize with great effectiveness.

While economic sanctions are useful and have to be selectively used, every effort must be made to minimize or alleviate the distress that may be caused to innocent civilian populations, especially vulnerable sectors such as women and children.

When it was created about half a century ago, the Security Council was shaped largely in the light of experience of inter-State wars. The idea was to prevent nations from fighting each other, mainly over territory. During the course of the last couple of decades, conflicts have been more intra-national: between political rivals, ethnic groups, religious persuasions or even political systems. Such conflicts have proved to be more difficult to resolve, and the complex humanitarian problems that arise are usually heartrending. Negotiations are often frustrating, and the interests of the multiple sides in such situations cannot easily fit the jigsaw puzzle of solutions. Here, we have the experience of conflicts in the Balkans and in Africa, as the Security Council report so clearly shows.

Conflicts have unfortunately acquired yet another dimension. As seen from the recent terrorist attacks on the United States, terrorism has no boundaries, no nationalities, and its enemies are unsuspecting innocent men, women and children. The weaponry used could be hijacked commercial aircraft, as recently used as missiles in kamikaze-type attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The terrorists could be suicide bombers in restaurants, buses or other places, killing mainly innocent civilians. Now there is every danger that terrorists could use biological, chemical and even nuclear weapons. It is very difficult to trace all the perpetrators of such terrorist violence, in view of their worldwide networks, yet terrorism has to be rooted out.

There must be constant vigilance, and action must be taken to nip the danger in the bud and uproot the indoctrination by those who preach hatred and violence and who seem to be spreading their tentacles the world over. All-out efforts also need to be made to try to

resolve the causes that give rise to such inhuman acts and drive people to such great extremes.

While the report of the Security Council shows that the world has changed a great deal since the founding of the United Nations, the Council's composition, except for an increase in the non-permanent category, remains practically the same. The evolving nature and responsibilities of the Security Council call for a membership that is representative of all continents and major groups of people in the world, both as permanent and non-permanent members. While it is understandable that a large number of countries cannot sit on the Council, the membership should be truly representative of the peoples of the world. This is one of the important keys to the successful functioning of the Council.

Finally, my delegation would like to thank the Security Council for its efforts to resolve conflicts, prevent conflagrations and maintain post-conflict peace, as well as undertake peace-building operations, during the year under review. The missions undertaken by the Secretary-General, his representatives and the members of the Council to conflict zones undoubtedly had a positive impact on many a tense situation. The involvement of the international community in various stages of a conflict or a potential conflict will go a long way towards deterring violence and peacefully resolving problems.

Mr. Petrič (Slovenia): I would like to thank the Secretariat for the comprehensive annual report on the work of the Security Council. The format of this report provides an extensive guide to the wide range of Council activities. Much effort has gone into this voluminous document, and we appreciate it.

While we appreciate the useful compendium of detailed facts and data in the report, its present format still does not facilitate an analytical overview that would genuinely assist non-members of the Council to creatively take part in the annual discussion of what are virtually the most pertinent issues before our Organization. Hence a significant part of the membership is deprived of the rare opportunity to more actively share views and contribute thereby to building the stature of the United Nations and spreading its relevance in world affairs.

A large majority of small delegations could find the report of the Security Council much more stimulating if it offered a review of methods by which it does its important work that have been proved to enhance its efficiency, and if it offered a concise assessment of areas in which the Council had made progress and areas in which it had failed. In addition to the useful description of work done, the report should also present a wider picture: an annual summary of the Council's accomplishments. Such a format would enable a better understanding and response by the wide membership of our Organization to the Council's activities and facilitate a meaningful and, if necessary, critical discussion in the General Assembly.

The Council's reporting to the General Assembly figures in the Charter with good reason. It enriches our Organization with the important notion of the Security Council's accountability to the universal membership of the United Nations. It is therefore important to ensure transparency in the work of the Council, since its decisions draw their legitimacy from the respect and support of the entire United Nations membership. While the Council retains its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, open working methods add to the efficient implementation of and compliance with its decisions.

Let me also point out our conviction that a suitable review of possible improvement in the openness and transparency of the Security Council's working methods would bring added value to future annual reports.

Let me now turn the page and salute the Council's diligent work. We are particularly satisfied with its progressive interest in dealing with an ever-wider range of important issues that are many times indirectly, but still closely, linked to the maintenance of international peace and security. This expanded agenda accurately reflects the need to attack the contemporary issues of peace and security and their root causes in all their multilayered complexity. Peace and security problems present themselves differently in the age of globalization, and the Council is displaying a commendable capacity to change and adapt to the current security environment.

This expanded agenda of the Security Council requires of all of us that we finally make the Council more representative, corresponding more closely to the existing international community. That is why Slovenia hopes that this year we shall achieve serious progress in the reform of the United Nations, and of the Security Council in particular.

In spite of the Council's capacity to adjust flexibly to the new realities, the report under review fails to give due attention to international terrorism as a threat to international peace and security. The surprise and shock we feel after 11 September are also partly a consequence of the inability of the international community to engage this problem in a timely and comprehensive manner. It is encouraging that we now finally all stand united in the fight against terrorism and that this unity has been reflected in two important Security Council resolutions and in the prompt establishment of its counter-terrorist Committee, which has already started its work. Slovenia firmly supports this collective struggle to eradicate terrorism, and our authorities are already considering appropriate new measures to help close the gaps in the universal defence against international terrorism.

In conclusion, let me especially commend the close attention the Security Council has devoted to issues of South-East Europe. In addition to the numerous open meetings of the Council that have given the membership of the United Nations an opportunity to understand and contribute to the full implementation of international commitments in South-Eastern Europe, we also recently witnessed the complete "mobile" Security Council session in that region. Such comprehensive, continuous and on-the-spot attention can bring peace closer even to the most troubled area.

We applaud the attention that the Council is devoting to the resolution of South-eastern Europe's remaining problems, and we encourage it to continue with the implementation of its promising road map.

The Council can rely on the continued and active assistance of Slovenia to this end, and it can count on our support, which we will provide to the best of our ability.

Before I conclude, allow me to make a few additional comments. Yesterday my dear friend and colleague, the Ambassador of Singapore, expressed his displeasure at the fact that, in a way, we are speaking here only to ourselves. Very little attention is being paid to this very important topic — the report of the Security Council to the main organ of the United Nations, the General Assembly.

I believe also that this is partly due to the fact that the five permanent members do not take part in this discussion. I really hope that next year we will have the privilege of hearing their views on the report submitted to the General Assembly by the Security Council.

Mr. Widodo (Indonesia): I should like at the outset to commend the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, for his lucid introduction of the Security Council's annual report to the General Assembly. It highlights, among other things, questions relating to the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, encompassing many regions of the world, as well as matters pertaining to its working methods and practices.

The report, which deals with conflict situations throughout the world, contains an update on political, security, human rights and humanitarian situations. We note that progress has been made towards de-escalating tensions; facilitating access to vulnerable civilians for personnel engaged in humanitarian activities; promoting the democratization process and the rule of law; implementing demobilization plans; and adopting an integrated approach to the political settlement of various conflicts — all leading to the achievement of lasting international peace and security.

As regards the situation in East Timor, it is pertinent to note that the holding of the historic elections last August and the establishment of the Constituent Assembly to draft its Constitution are significant first steps towards the achievement of a democratic society. Thus, in considering the future role of the Organization, including the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor, their participation should take the form of extending full and unstinting support to facilitate the realization of the legitimate needs and aspirations of its people, including in the vital field of nation-building. At this crucial period in East Timor's history, there can be no stronger foundation for peace, security and harmony than the establishment of a thriving and robust civil society, along with efforts to promote true reconciliation.

We agree with the widely held view that the Security Council should be responsive to the General Assembly's recommendations; be accountable for its actions and decisions; fully support the continuing endeavours of the Secretary-General to improve the peacekeeping machinery; and utilize opportunities for greater interaction with other United Nations bodies and agencies.

As far as the working methods and practices of the Security Council are concerned, we deem it necessary to reiterate our call for a change in both the content and format of the report. A descriptive list of the decisions and resolutions adopted by the Council, together with presidential statements, depicts an important part of the role played by the Council and its efforts to make its activities more open and transparent. This offers an opportunity for Member States to evaluate the decisions taken and to reach conclusions. But the longstanding concern of the majority of States that wish to see analytical reports has not been alleviated by the persistence of an approach characterized by the compilation of numerous documents, a mere description of activities and the reproduction of resolutions we already know about.

My delegation has noted the trend towards an increasing number of open meetings of the Council, with the increasing participation of non-members in its deliberations. Assessments made by former Presidents offer a broad overview of the developments that have taken place and provide useful insights. These have contributed to greater transparency in the Council's functioning and methods of work.

In conclusion, I wish to congratulate the newly elected non-permanent members — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic — and to wish them every success in the discharge of their responsibilities.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): Once again, the report of the Security Council is before the General Assembly, so that the members of this body can express their views on the responsibility of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security. This report, among other things, enables Member States to examine how the general membership can collectively contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. It is in that spirit that Namibia is participating in this debate.

Lasting peace and security is a common aspiration of all Member States, and therefore it is not only proper, but indeed necessary, that all of us give the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly the attention it deserves. Against this background, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador Richard Ryan of Ireland, for introducing the report.

Namibia congratulates the new non-permanent members elected to the Security Council — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syria Arab Republic. Similarly, we pay tribute to the outgoing delegations of Bangladesh, Jamaica, Mali, Tunisia and Ukraine, which have so effectively represented us on the Security Council.

A number of issues contained in the report under discussion were considered during Namibia's tenure in the Security Council. Today, I shall comment on some of them.

The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains of great concern to my delegation. During the period under review, the Security Council considered the situation on numerous occasions. The Secretary-General issued a number of reports, and the Security Council subsequently adopted presidential statements and resolutions, some of them under full Chapter VII. In addition, the Security Council dispatched its mission to the region which, inter alia, held a meeting with the Political Committee in Lusaka, Zambia. Nevertheless, the situation of ordinary Congolese people remains daunting. Already victims of aggression, they are further victimized as a result of the much sought-after wealth of their economically devastated country. It appears that aggression against their country has become palatable to the international community. Article 51 of the Charter seems not to be applicable to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and so the status quo persists. Furthermore, those who went into the Congo, under Article 51 of the Charter, have withdrawn, while the aggressors continue to besiege the Congolese people.

In July of last year, the Secretary-General appointed an Expert Panel on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I take this opportunity to express, once again, my delegation's appreciation to Ms. Safiatou Ba-N'Daw, the first Chairperson of the Panel, for her tenacity in exposing the shameless plundering of the natural resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Panel fulfilled the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council. My delegation expects the Security Council to act on the recommendations of its Panel, regardless of who the culprits are. No one should be above international law, no matter whose vested interests are at stake. The interests of the Congolese people should be the

overriding principle, and not the economic interest of a few under the guise of national security.

I am making reference to all these issues in an attempt to demonstrate the widening gap between some conflict situations and the readiness of the Security Council to take action and implement its resolutions.

There can be no other question before the Council to better illustrate this point than the consideration of the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo by the Security Council. In resolution 1291 (2000), the Security Council authorized the deployment of up to 5537 military observers under the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). To date, these observers have not yet been fully deployed. While we regret this regressive development, I wish to commend MONUC for the good work it is doing in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. There is no doubt that the presence of MONUC on the ground has had a stabilizing effect. And we believe that the full deployment of MONUC will pave the way for the full realization of the peace process. The Security Council should complete deployment of phase II of MONUC and proceed without delay to phase III. We are convinced that only objective consideration of all questions before the Council will do justice to the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. And only a democratic and representative Security Council will act with the same vigour in all situations in all geographic locations.

Every issue before the Security Council is important, for it impacts one way or the other the maintenance of international peace and security. The situation in Sierra Leone, Somalia, Angola, the Middle East, Western Sahara and East Timor, as well as the protection of children in armed conflict and peacekeeping operations, are all among the issues to which my delegation attaches great importance.

Peacekeeping operations are costly, and hence their proper planning and implementation are of common concern to all. It is therefore imperative that constant consultations between the Security Council and the troop-contributing countries become the norm.

Last year in October, the Security Council had an unprecedented debate on women, peace and security. A resolution was adopted, taking into account the views expressed by the general membership of the United Nations. The resolution, among other things, invited the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimension of peace processes and conflict resolution. My delegation looks forward to this report, as well as to any recommendation which might be contained therein. And while on this issue, let me point out that my delegation shares the view expressed by Jamaica on this matter.

For many decades the people of Namibia were denied their right to self-determination and independence. As such, we can relate to the suffering of any people under foreign occupation, be it in Africa or the Middle East. In this regard, it is critical that the Security Council move swiftly to authorize the deployment of a United Nations observer force, to protect Palestinian civilians and ensure the full implementation of the recommendations of the Mitchell Report.

The situation concerning Western Sahara is before the Council and the General Assembly. In 1990, the General Assembly adopted resolution 45/21 on the United Nations settlement plan in Western Sahara. We remain deeply concerned by the manner in which the Security Council is deliberating on this issue. The Security Council cannot, and should not, undo the relevant General Assembly resolutions calling for a referendum in Western Sahara. The Security Council has a responsibility towards the people of Western Sahara, and it must uphold that responsibility.

On Angola, the strengthening of Security Council sanctions against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) is paying dividends. We must enforce the sanctions further and do all we can to destroy the ability of UNITA to wage war, so that the people of Angola can rebuild their lives and reconstruct their country.

In his note in document S/1995/234 of 29 March 1995, the President of the Security Council decided, among other things, that in order to make the procedures of the sanctions Committees more transparent, the report of the Council to the General Assembly should entail more information than at present. In our view, this decision has yet to be implemented in full, for the current report clearly shows that some Committees' activities are more detailed than others. In the view of my delegation, all sanctions Committees are of equal importance, and the

reports of the Council to the General Assembly should reflect this.

Let me conclude by supporting the proposal made by numerous delegations that spoke before me that the views expressed by the general membership on the Security Council's report to the General Assembly should be seriously considered by the Council and also taken into account in the conduct of the work of the Security Council. Only then can the effectiveness of the Security Council — and, in particular, the quality of its reports to the General Assembly — be improved.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I, too, would like to thank Ambassador Richard Ryan, Permanent Representative of Ireland and President of the Security Council for the month of October, for his presentation of the fifty-sixth annual report of the Council to the General Assembly.

My delegation attaches great importance to this agenda item because the consideration of the report, pursuant to Articles 15 and 24 of the Charter, provides the General Assembly with an opportunity to evaluate the way the Security Council has discharged its principal responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this case the period under consideration is from 16 June 2000 to 15 June 2001.

As a member of the Council since 1 January 2000, and in accordance with its commitments, Mali has worked steadfastly and constructively with other delegations to improve the functioning of the Council both in its consideration of substantive matters and in its working methods. It is against that dual backdrop that I wish to make a few comments on the report under consideration.

I would first like to highlight the qualitative improvement in the functioning of the Council. This is most evident in the Council's seeking to better understand the conflicts before it. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the increase in dispatching Security Council missions to conflict regions. During the period under consideration, the Council sent missions to the Great Lakes region, Sierra Leone and Kosovo. Although those missions did not always lead to significant breakthroughs in the settlement of conflicts, they certainly enabled the Council to have a better grasp of them, thereby helping to shed light on the Council's subsequent discussions and, consequently, improving its decision-making process. This is particularly useful in developing or modifying mandates for peacekeeping operations. That is why my delegation believes that the Council should continue this sort of activity in the future.

We are also pleased to see more direct contacts with parties to conflicts and with regional actors, notably through the holding of so-called private meetings of the Council. Those meetings have allowed for frank and interactive exchanges of views between members of the Council and regional players and organizations, which does not always take place in public meetings. On 29 September 2000, during Mali's presidency of the Council, we organized a very fruitful exchange of views with President Nelson Mandela on the peace process in Burundi and on issues related to the implementation of the peace Agreement there.

Along the same lines, the growing cooperation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been noteworthy and encouraging. The Council recognized the need to support, within the framework of a genuine partnership, the efforts of that regional organization in the management of the conflicts and crises besetting the West African subregion. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the meeting held on 12 February 2001 between the Security Council and the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council on Liberia. Likewise, we welcome the sending of a United Nations Inter-Agency Mission to West Africa. We hope that its operational conclusions will strengthen a true partnership between ECOWAS and the United Nations, the Security Council in particular.

My second comment has to do with a second noteworthy development that took place during the period covered by the current report of the Security Council, namely, the considerable development of the means of action available to the Council — to which Mali contributed during its presidency in September 2000. In this connection, I would like to stress the need for practical implementation of the commitments made at the historic meeting of the Council held on 7 September 2000 at the level of heads of State and Government to find a proper, effective and lasting response to conflicts, particularly in Africa. Mali will pay special attention to the implementation of resolution 1318 (2000), which was adopted at that meeting.

In the same vein, we welcome the adoption of resolution 1327 (2000), by which the Council followed up the recommendations relevant to its competence made by the Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations. Likewise, we hope that resolution 1353 (2001) will help strengthen cooperation with troop-contributing countries.

Noticeable progress has also been made towards enhanced effectiveness and better targeting of some sanctions regimes. Although sanctions are a useful instrument that the Council can use, in accordance with the Charter, in well-defined circumstances, their negative and unintended impacts have made them a source of legitimate concern for the international community. We therefore welcome the Council's new approach aimed at sanctions that are better targeted and imposed for specific periods, and that lead to change in the behaviour of clearly identified groups or individuals.

As the report under consideration indicates, the Security Council has devoted much time and attention to problems that go beyond the maintenance of peace: conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. Mali welcomes the fact that there has been increased recourse to public debates and open briefings in considering these and other questions, which promote transparency in the Council's work. My delegation will continue to play an active role in encouraging this trend.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my warm congratulations to the newly elected members of the Council — Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and Syria. We wish them every success in carrying out their new responsibilities.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): I wish to thank Ambassador Richard Ryan for his presentation of the fifty-sixth annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly. The consideration of the report provides an important occasion for the General assembly to deliberate on the work of the Security Council. As an elected member, we shall share some of our experience on the Council and make a few observations.

But before doing so, I would like to convey our warmest congratulations to the newly elected members of the Council: Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic. We are confident they will bring fresh impetus to the work of the Council.

Bangladesh came to the Security Council with the determination to pursue three objectives in particular: first, to strengthen the role of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security; secondly, to make the Council a more proactive rather than a reactive body; and, thirdly, to make the Council more transparent and open to participation by non-members and other stakeholders. To promote these objectives we supported every effort to ensure that the Security Council has the commitment, the unity and the capacity to address, expeditiously and effectively, all international peace and security issues. We have argued that the cause of peace and security is best advanced by action within the United Nations framework. We believe that the objective of global peace and security can be better achieved by allowing the Security Council to play its role and by strengthening its capacity to implement its decisions.

Bangladesh has favoured a more proactive, rather than reactive, role for the Security Council. We have argued that peacekeeping should be pursued as part of a continuous process, involving conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-building, within the framework of a comprehensive approach.

Given the political, economic and, above all, humanitarian imperatives of conflict prevention, we have put emphasis on preventive actions, in addition to the need for ensuring an immediate response to peacekeeping requirements. The Council carried forward the recommendations contained in the June report of the Secretary-General on conflict prevention in the light of contributions from a large part of the United Nations membership. The imperative of prevention had been emphasized in this Assembly by Member States deliberating on the report. The Council responded to that report by adopting resolution 1366 (2001), which recognizes the Council's own responsibilities, as well as the competence of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, the Economic and Social Council, the funds, programmes and agencies of the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions, civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the private sector. Conflict prevention is a shared responsibility. The fulfilment of this shared commitment will require concerted action by all stakeholders.

As an elected member of the Council, Bangladesh has promoted openness, transparency and the participation of the United Nations membership and

other actors in its deliberations. We have favoured holding Council meetings in public unless doing so was not in the interests of the objectives pursued by the Council. We have pleaded for the participation of non-members and other stakeholders, such as the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, in Council deliberations. We have also sought ways and means to involve NGOs in the work of the Council as partners in the peace and security mission of the United Nations.

We have insisted on Council decision making by 15 members. We have sought to make the Council a rule-based organ, upholding the principle and the objective of collective security in our action. It has been a convenient practice to have a group of friends for each conflict area. We recognize the extremely valuable contribution made by these groups in drafting Council resolutions, but we join others in calling for greater transparency in the working methods of these groups to prevent those Council members that are not represented in any of these groups from being virtually excluded from the decision-making process. There should be an official list of the composition of the various friends' groups, however informal they may be. The list of the friends' groups and their activities should be posted on the United Nations Web site.

The adoption of resolution 1353 (2001) by a unanimous vote marked a major step forward in strengthening cooperation with troop-contributing countries. In accordance with the provisions of that resolution, the troop-contributing countries were recognized as an important partner for peacekeeping cooperation. Elaborate provisions were made in that resolution for consultation with the troop-contributing countries at different stages of peacekeeping operations, from their inception to their closure, using different formats, procedures and documentation. Bangladesh has proposed the holding of periodic meetings between the Council and the troop-contributing countries, instead of the last-minute pro forma meetings generally called prior to the renewal of peacekeeping mandates. Such periodic meetings would allow the concerns and positions of troop-contributing countries to be better reflected in Council decisions.

Bangladesh took the initiative of introducing improvements in the working methods and documentation of the Council. The Council's Working Group on Documentation and Procedures — the body devoted to its working methods — met for substantive discussion in March 2000 and then 15 months later, in June 2001 — on both occasions during Bangladesh's presidency. In March 2000, we succeeded in providing for the distribution of copies of statements within the Council Chamber. This year, a note issued by the President of the Security Council on 29 June provided for strengthening the practice with regard to the communication and dissemination of Council decisions and statements.

The note brought about three important improvements. First, press statements made by the President of the Council are now issued as United Nations press releases, thus ensuring their wide dissemination. Secondly, as a matter of standard practice, Council decisions and statements are to be brought by the President to the notice not only of the Member States concerned, but also of concerned regional organizations and arrangements. Thirdly, through the Secretary-General's representatives in the field, the secretariat will now arrange for the timely and effective communication of Council decisions and statements, as well as their widest possible dissemination.

Efforts have been made to enhance cooperation between the Council and the General Assembly. At the invitation of the President of the General Assembly, during Bangladesh's presidency in June 2001, the President and representatives of two other members — Colombia and the United Kingdom — participated in a meeting of the General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group on Security Council reform devoted to working methods. The President of the Council shared the experience of the Council over the year and noted the improvements made in the Council's working methods. The Ambassadors of Colombia and of the United Kingdom added further reflections on how to improve the functioning of the Security Council and its cooperation with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

As a follow up, we have argued that the Council should be responsive to the demands of the United Nations membership. With regard to working methods, we have argued that the Council should give serious consideration to the recommendations of the Open-ended Working Group on Council reform.

I should like to conclude with three observations. First, during the reporting year, with a few exceptional periods, the Council, as a principal organ has been

through an intensive work programme. It has remained actively seized of conflict situations. We made efforts, where consensus made it possible, to prevent the escalation or deterioration of conflicts. We sought to resolve conflicts by sending special missions of the Council and by holding meetings with the concerned countries, including at the highest levels. The results have been mixed. The failure or lack of progress in certain areas have sometimes been beyond the control of the Council. The political realities prohibiting or circumscribing the role and effectiveness of Council action need no research.

Secondly, the Council has evolved. It has made considerable progress in respect of openness and transparency and in involving the larger membership in its work. It has been more proactive than reactive, sending special missions to the Great Lakes, West Africa and Kosovo in the span of one year, and addressing issues on the basis of developments rather than as calendar events determined by the submission of reports or the expiry of mandates.

Thirdly, there has been a substantive evolution in the Council's perception of peace and security. The maintenance of peace and security is no longer seen as the work of a fire brigade, acting only when a conflict flares up. The Council, largely at the initiative of elected members, devoted a considerable amount of time and attention to areas beyond peacekeeping — to conflict prevention, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. The challenge of maintaining international peace and security is increasingly recognized as a continuing process requiring a comprehensive approach and involving all stakeholders.

It might be pointed out that, despite all the improvements, a number of conflicts have remained unresolved, some of them for decades. The obvious conclusion is that the Security Council has the primary — though not the exclusive — responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council, like the United Nations as a whole, is what its members agree that it is, and it does what they agree that it should do. The rule of consensus prevails and the power of veto is determinant.

The award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the United Nations and to the Secretary-General has raised expectations higher. We hope that the Security Council will be able to do better in the changed circumstances.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): Let me begin by expressing our appreciation to my good friend, Ambassador Richard Ryan, the Permanent Representative of Ireland and current President of the Security Council, for introducing the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

We are considering the report of the Security Council in accordance with Article 15 of the Charter at a time when we are confronted with a new challenge, the challenge of international terrorism, as manifested in the tragic events of 11 September. Indeed, this is a new challenge for this Organization in meeting its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

This debate also coincides with another momentous event. Last week the United Nations and the Secretary-General were awarded the centenary Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of their services to humanity. This was a welcome development. We all feel honoured. The Secretary-General certainly deserved this honour. He has been speaking the truth and keeping our faith in the United Nation alive. We commend his dedication to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations and appreciate the exemplary leadership he has provided to this world body as "mankind's last best hope" in these difficult and complex times. We hope that the Secretary-General will continue to play a more proactive role in strengthening the United Nations as the uniquely positioned forum to pursue global peace and prosperity.

The United Nations, our Organization, has also shared this Nobel Peace Prize. The Nobel Committee in Oslo, we are sure, must have weighed the reasons for this decision. I am sure that we all welcome this shared honour. This is a moment for reflection and some soul-searching. But should not we ask ourselves in all sincerity if the United Nations has indeed provided the requisite moral edifice and a genuine multilateral approach in reordering the global system on the basis of justice and equality?

Painfully, our world today is neither just nor equal; it is divided into two separate humanities, one embarrassingly rich and the other desperately poor. It remains afflicted with violence and conflicts, injustice and oppression. There are people still denied their inalienable rights, including the cardinal right of self-

determination. We hope that the Nobel Peace Prize will inspire the United Nations to do more and to fulfil its promises and its Charter obligations.

The twenty-first century, to be different from the previous one — which was the century of the worst carnage of our times — has to close the chapters of despair and disillusionment. The United Nations will acquit itself well in doing so if it can secure world peace and prosperity by resolving the Palestine and Kashmir issues on the basis of justice and equity, by restoring stable peace in Afghanistan through dialogue and reconciliation, by eradicating the curse of universal terrorism from our planet, by bringing to end the conflicts in Africa and by evolving a new development paradigm through cooperation in terms of trade, investment, partnership and interdependence.

The Secretary-General has himself said while acknowledging the Nobel Peace Prize that "The world is a messy place and unfortunately the messier it gets, the more work we have to do." It is a very sincere and candid message, which the entire membership must heed. There are expectations from the United Nations, which it must meet in today's changed and changing world.

These are unusual times demanding exceptional responses. As we confront the universal evil of terrorism in a resolute and determined manner, we cannot be oblivious of the need to address this problem at its roots. The Security Council must rise above power politics and political expediency and respond to crises and conflicts in an objective manner. It must restore its credibility and authority and work as an instrument of peace and security, and not one of punishment of peoples and nations. The sanctions-oriented policy of the Council, we have always said, has solved no problems; it will solve no problems. It has only aggravated human misery, perpetuated conflicts, undermined State sovereignty, impaired the United Nations image and provoked a climate of mistrust and confrontation. It is time now to reappraise this approach and to revert to the role assigned to the Security Council by the Charter.

In accordance with the Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, and the general membership must facilitate the fulfilment of this mandate. It is not the United Nations that has failed; it is the membership that has disabled the United Nations from carrying out its Charter mandate.

Also under the Charter, the Council has an obligation to make its annual report available for the consideration of the international community's main representative body, the General Assembly. This Council obligation emanates from Article 11 of the Charter, which authorizes the Assembly to "consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security". It is also pursuant to Article 24 and to Article 15, which entrusts the Assembly with considering the "account of the measures" the Council takes to maintain international peace and security.

While this annual report provides a copious compilation of the work of the Council, it does not conform to the requirement of the "account of the measures", as stipulated in Article 15. The content of this report does not assist the wider membership of the United Nations to assess how the Council discharged its responsibilities under the Charter. Neither is there an analysis of what was or was not done, nor an assessment of whether the actions taken were effective or ineffective.

There is an unfortunate tendency to make the reports voluminous by adding unnecessary documentation, as well as duplication. The other day, somebody in the corridors of the United Nations was just mentioning that the United Nations is perhaps the largest consumer of paper in the world and also the largest producer of waste paper in the world. I hope we can prove this wrong. This comes at a very high financial price, without adding any value to the assessment of the performance of the Council. What the report needs is useful analysis and accurate assessment rather than needless duplication and the profligate waste of financial resources. We can read newspapers; they do not have to be reproduced in the reports of the Security Council or, for that matter, other bodies of the United Nations system.

A report can only be considered useful if it lays down all the bare facts and conforms to the standards of transparency and accountability. Yet, these very aspects are conspicuous in this report by their absence. For example, while the report does provide a list of meetings of its informal consultations, there is no record of what was decided in those meetings. Sadly,

what is true of this report also reflects the work of the Security Council.

What the report does, however, reflect and reflects accurately, is that some issues before the Council are taken less seriously than others. There are issues which have remained on the agenda of the Council, unaddressed for decades and unimplemented. This selectivity in addressing and implementing its own resolutions raises serious questions about the Security Council's credibility. The widely held impression that the Security Council applies different standards to conflicts in different parts of the world must not be allowed to become a general conviction or rule. All resolutions of the Council must be implemented without any discrimination, be they on Palestine or Kashmir, Afghanistan or any other part of the world. The fact is that in all cases, conflict continues, peace remains elusive and human misery is aggravated owing to the inaction of the Security Council.

There should be no discrimination in the implementation of the resolutions of the Security Council on the basis of their adoption under Chapter VI or Chapter VII of the Charter. These are mere technicalities. They do not change the objective realities or the nature of the problems that are confronted by the international community. Such distinctions are irrelevant. Technicalities of this nature cannot be applied to a situation involving the destiny of a people and when there is a serious threat to the peace and security of a region. This is the touchstone of the Council's credibility and effectiveness.

We believe that the intensity and number of conflicts can be minimized if sufficient commitment, concern, engagement, objectivity and even-handedness are demonstrated by the Security Council. The Security Council is empowered to call upon the parties to settle their disputes, for which ways and means are provided in the Charter, including mechanisms for conflict prevention and dispute resolution. Responsibility in this regard should not be evaded on the pretext that disputes should be resolved bilaterally by the concerned parties. If that were the case, then the question arises as to what the need was for us to have this United Nations, or what the Council's real role is with regard to the maintenance of international peace and security.

The credibility of the Security Council is undermined each time it ignores a conflict, leaving it to be resolved by the parties concerned. While cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations needs to be improved, we firmly believe that the regional organizations can play only a limited role in the prevention of armed conflicts in consonance with Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter. It is the Security Council which has the primary responsibility for conflict prevention and dispute resolution.

There has been a trend of late to expand the role of the Security Council beyond its primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. Efforts to broaden the Council's agenda by including HIV/AIDS, the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and various other issues, such as those related to women, international law and disarmament, are all distractions which erode the Security Council's effectiveness and unifocal approach. They take the focus away from its main task and mandate. These subjects are extremely important; there is no doubt about it. We all attach great importance to all these issues, but these subjects clearly fall within the domain of the General Assembly and its various other bodies, and not that of the Security Council. The Council must not deviate in any way from its Charter mandate or obligations.

United Nations peacekeeping activities have an important role in assisting the Council in maintaining and restoring international peace and stability. As a major troop-contributor, Pakistan appreciates the Council's intentions and efforts to increase cooperation with troop-contributing countries in United Nations peacekeeping operations. In this regard, we recognize its resolution 1327 (2000) as a milestone in setting a new tone for such cooperation. While we acknowledge that the Council is still working on ways to improve this cooperation, we regret that resolution 1353 (2001) falls far short of the expectations of many major troop contributors. We nevertheless look forward to working with the Security Council's Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations to enhance this cooperation. And I must register here our profound appreciation for the valuable work being done by Ambassador Ward of Jamaica on this subject.

I will now briefly touch upon some of the current working practices of the Security Council. Closed door

or informal consultations remain the rule rather than the exception for Security Council meetings. Open or public meetings take place only after behind-the-door agreements are reached. There is so much choreography and dramatization. In the process, we have encountered the invisible use of the veto time and again. This practice of informal consultations runs contrary to the requirements of transparency and accountability, especially when no record of such consultations is kept or shared with the general membership, which elects the members of the Council.

Another recent innovation in Council meetings is the open thematic debates. As we understand it, this practice was introduced to enable Member States to express their views on any given theme or issue, which would then be taken into account by the Security Council at the time of decision-making. In reality, members of the Council in most cases finalize the draft resolution or presidential statement in advance, behind closed doors, before the open meetings. The script is already agreed upon, only to be subsequently enacted, like a play on stage. Such debates are thus reduced to sterile exercises, as in a debating club or a dramatic club, in which Member States are heard, or act, but are not listened to.

Having said that, I must place on record our appreciation to the members of the Council that have contributed immensely to bringing about greater transparency in the working methods and practices of the Council. This trend needs to be further encouraged, sustained and reinforced. In our view, these progressive changes will strengthen the credibility of the Council. To this end, the Security Council is urged to seriously consider the views expressed in this debate.

We remain committed to the comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects. The general membership's trust and confidence in the Security Council can be reinforced only by strengthening its democratic, accountable and participatory character and not by creating new centres of power or privilege.

In conclusion, I would like to felicitate Syria, Mexico, Guinea, Cameroon and Bulgaria on their election to the Council last week. We look forward to working closely with them in pursuit of global peace, security and prosperity. I would also like to pay tribute to the outgoing members of the Council for their important contributions to the promotion of international peace and security.

Finally, I seek the Assembly's indulgence if the length of my statement failed to match the volume of the Security Council's report.

Mr. Li Hyong Chol (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to express high appreciation to Ambassador Richard Ryan, President of the Security Council, for having introduced the annual report of the Security Council to the General Assembly.

The number of open-ended meetings of the Security Council has recently increased, thus improving its work in respect of transparency. However, the methods of work of the Security Council still lag far behind the expectations of the Member States. Closed meetings continue to be the main format of consultations in the work of the Security Council. Closed meetings are not the format stipulated in either the United Nations Charter or the rules of procedure of the Security Council. They also do not conform to the provisions of the Charter that require the Security Council to carry out its duties on behalf of the Member States in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

All issues, except for procedural matters, should be discussed at open-ended meetings in order for transparency to be ensured in the activities of the Security Council. The Security Council should not expand the scope of its work to issues beyond its mandate provided by the Charter. This would only result in weakening the role of the General Assembly and other principal organs. It is also important to ensure that the activities of the Security Council are not abused for any specific political objectives.

The Security Council should take a serious approach to the issue of sanctions and apply them only as a last resort for preventing the expansion of conflict. When there is no other choice but sanctions, their purpose, scope and duration must be clearly defined. It is necessary and would be useful to establish a mechanism in which decisions of the Security Council on sanctions are taken on the recommendation of the General Assembly. This would help to ensure a maximum level of discretion in taking sanctions measures, minimize the negative impact of sanctions and prevent double standards in the work of the Security Council. My delegation considers it necessary that guidelines on sanctions, the use of force and so on

be laid down and that an open-ended working group of the General Assembly be established for this purpose.

The Security Council, with its important responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, should conduct its business on the basis of absolute fairness and objectivity. When the Security Council lacks impartiality and is overpowered by high-handedness, world peace and security are seriously damaged.

In the southern part of the Korean peninsula, there still exists the "United Nations Command", which is said to have been established in 1950 by a Security Council resolution. It serves as an entity that confronts the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, a State Member of the United Nations. The "United Nations Command" is illegal in view of the process of its establishment, as well as the mode of its existence.

Security Council resolution 84 of 7 July 1950, which is disputably referred to as a legal basis for the establishment of the "United Nations Command", was adopted in a coercive manner, in contravention of the United Nations Charter. The Soviet Union, which did not attend the meeting of the Security Council at the time of the resolution's adoption, sent a letter to the Secretary-General on 11 July 1950, in which it declared that the 7 July resolution of the Security Council contravened the United Nations Charter and was illegal. This clearly represented the exercise of the right of veto of a permanent member of the Security Council.

Any subsidiary organ of the United Nations should be established by a resolution of either the Security Council or the General Assembly. The United Nations Charter stipulates in paragraph 3 of Article 47 that

> "The Military Staff Committee shall be responsible under the Security Council for the strategic direction of any armed forces placed at the disposal of the Security Council."

However, nothing was done by the Military Staff Committee with regard to the establishment of the "United Nations Command" and the "United Nations Command" did not act upon any instructions of the United Nations.

The former Secretary-General Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali stated in 1994 that the Security Council did not establish the unified command as a subsidiary organ under its control, but merely recommended the creation of such a command, specifying that it should be under the authority of the United States, and that therefore, the dissolution of the unified command was a matter within the competence of the Government of the United States.

The "United Nations Command", though named after the United Nations, does not receive any instruction from the United Nations; nor is it operated through the United Nations budget. In reality, it has nothing to do with the United Nations. All the facts indicate that the "United Nations Command" in South Korea was set up not by the United Nations but by the United States. The United Nations should take steps to withdraw its name and its flag, which are being abused by the United States. And United States, as a party which assumes direct responsibility for peace on the Korean peninsula, should take practical measures to ensure durable peace in Korea.

In conclusion, my delegation congratulates Bulgaria, Cameroon, Guinea, Mexico and the Syrian Arab Republic on their election to membership of the Security Council. My delegation hopes that fairness and transparency will be enhanced to the fullest extent in the work of the Council and that Council reform will make further progress in that direction.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to thank the Permanent Representative of Ireland, His Excellency Ambassador Richard Ryan, for his introduction of the report of the Security Council to the General Assembly (A/56/2). In our view, the Assembly's consideration of the annual report gives States Members of the United Nations an opportunity to review the events that took place in the international arena and the activities of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, and to evaluate the extent to which the Council has met its responsibilities under the Charter.

The General Assembly has adopted a number of measures intended to strengthen the relationship between the Assembly and the Security Council, both of which are principal organs of the United Nations. In its resolution 47/233, adopted in 1993, the Assembly encouraged Member States to participate actively in a substantive and in-depth discussion on, and consideration of, the reports of the Security Council. In resolution 48/264 of 1994, the Assembly invited its President to propose appropriate ways and means to

facilitate an in-depth discussion by the Assembly of matters contained in the reports submitted to it by the Security Council. In resolution 51/193 of 1996, the Assembly listed a number of measures in connection with the content of future reports.

In the context of such General Assembly decisions, we note that the report of the Security Council indicates that consultation and cooperation with troop-contributing countries have become an established practice. We hope that this will develop further with a view to ensuring that troop-contributing countries participate in defining the mandates of operations and their role in the maintenance of peace and security.

We welcome the holding, sometimes daily, of briefings for non-member States. We also welcome the monthly assessments prepared by Presidents of the Security Council; these enable us to follow rationally and objectively the activities of the Council. But nonetheless, we continue to believe that such improvements are not commensurate with the concerns expressed by Member States and do not fully meet the requests made by the general membership of the General Assembly through its resolutions.

The report is a costly undertaking; it is a compendium of decisions about which Member States already know. We would like to see substantive changes in future reports to ensure that they will be short in format but substantial in content. In that connection, we agree with the proposal made earlier in this debate by the representative of Singapore.

In connection with the activities of the Security Council, the report makes reference to the Council's provisional rules of procedure. Rule 48 says that the Council shall meet in public. But the practice is quite different. We learn from the report that the Council met 358 times; 185 of those meetings were consultations of the whole. For these, only dates and document references are given in the report. Clearly, the large number of informal consultations runs counter to the provisions of paragraph 4 (a) of General Assembly resolution 51/193, and to the call by members of the Assembly for transparency in Security Council deliberations.

We understand that a certain number of closed meetings facilitates the work of the Security Council. But so many informal meetings call into question the legitimacy of the work of the Security Council, which bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. We therefore call for respect for the letter and the spirit of the Charter with regard to Security Council activities: under Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter, States affected by a question should participate in the discussion of that question.

We believe that the Council's report should cover all its deliberations and should reflect all the opinions expressed by its members. States Members of the United Nations do not really want to know how many meetings were held or how many hours they took. We need to know the details: the opinions, the positions and the proposals expressed in the course of the Council's informal consultations — which took some 325 hours during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, the Security Council considered a number of conflicts and other issues affecting international peace and security. It was able to ease tension in some areas, but could not prevent conflicts in others. That is because the Council did not cooperate with some of the actors with responsibility for international peace and security, specifically the General Assembly.

Article 11 of the Charter states that the General Assembly may discuss any questions relating to international peace and security and may make recommendations to the Security Council. If the Council had respected the provisions of the Charter in this area and had provided special reports to the Assembly under Articles 15 and 24, then many crises and conflicts would have been resolved and tragedies avoided.

It is clear that veto rights have prevented the Council from taking necessary measures to settle some issues. It could not lift sanctions from my country, although we have respected all the requirements in this matter, as illustrated by the Secretary-General, the majority of Members of the United Nations and the Security Council itself. This fact was also behind the Council's action recently when it failed to send an international force to protect the Palestinian people from Zionist oppression. These examples show that the privilege of the right of veto is not used to promote international security; rather, it is a tool used for foreign policy purposes by some members. In this way, the Council becomes a tool for such foreign policy rather than a tool to be used by the international community as a whole.

Last month the Council looked into measures to combat international terrorism and adopted its resolution 1373 (2001). This was done several hours before the General Assembly looked into the matter, an action that leads to substantive questions on the part of United Nations members. It also leads to doubts as to the legitimacy of resolution 1373 (2001). Furthermore, no distinction was made between the right of a nation — the United States — to punish those responsible for the terrorist acts of 11 September, which were condemned by the international community, including my country, and the collective responsibility of the United Nations, not a single country or a small group of countries, to combat international terrorism. This has created a climate that is not favourable for combating the forces of international terrorism; it may even encourage such forces. We would like to warn against accidental ramifications of all this. These tendencies have to be reversed before it is too late.

The Security Council has looked at African issues at great length. It held several meetings on Somalia, Sierra Leone, Angola, Burundi and other countries. Here we hail Security Council resolution 1318 (2000), which underlined the importance of cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and African mechanisms and bodies dealing with conflict resolution. We are convinced that global development, international peace and peace-building compel us to have a global strategy to deal with the conflicts in Africa and with economic and social matters. Without them, sustainable global peace is impossible. Somalia is but one example.

The United Nations and the international community undertook to help Africa. It is important to eradicate poverty, because the continent has the greatest number of inhabitants who live on less than $1 per day. The international community also has to help us fight diseases, especially HIV/AIDS in Africa, since it threatens the lives of more than 30 million people. In order to make sure that we have genuine international solidarity with Africa, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya would like to reaffirm that Africa has to be integrated into the global economy, obstacles to exports have to be removed, harmful economic measures have to be lifted, and external debts dealt with.

Lastly, allow me to say that we are in the habit of taking note of the report of the Security Council. We think — and we believe others are of a similar view — that this is not nearly enough when we talk about the priority of the United Nations: the maintenance of international peace and security. The ideas and proposals voiced by Member States have to be translated into practical recommendations, as stipulated in Articles 10 and 11 of the Charter. If we want to ensure that this becomes a truly important discussion, then we should show our determination to support efforts by the General Assembly to build a better and more peaceful and stable world.

Mr. Ouch (Cambodia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Members of the United Nations agreed in the Charter to confer on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. They also agreed that the Council should submit annual and, when necessary, special reports to the General Assembly for its consideration, and that these reports should include an account of the measures that the Council has decided upon or taken to maintain peace and security.

We believe that the General Assembly agenda item under discussion, "Report of the Security Council", is a very important matter indeed. It is not routine, irrespective of the quality of the report presented. The debate here is the time and place for the membership of our Organization to consider the Council's actions, or inaction, in light of its ultimate collective responsibility for peace and security in the world.

If the Council fails to fulfil its responsibility due to a negative position of a permanent member, members may exercise their own collective responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security in accordance with General Assembly resolution 377 (V) of 1950 entitled "Uniting for peace".

Palestine, for reasons known, is not yet a full member of this Organization, but we are participating in today's debate to complain about the failure of the Security Council to fulfil its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security — specifically, when the Council has failed to take the necessary measures concerning the dangerous situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, which has existed for more than a year, a

situation that has endangered the whole Middle East and threatened international peace and security.

On 7 October 2000, a few days after the beginning of the sharp and broad deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, the Security Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000), which, inter alia, deplored the provocation carried out at Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem on 28 September 2000, and the subsequent violence there and at other Holy Places, and in areas throughout the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, resulting in over 80 Palestinian deaths and many other causalties. The Council condemned those acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force against Palestinians, and called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to abide by its obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

That was a reasonable and adequate response on the part of the Security Council at the time. Unfortunately, however, the situation continued to deteriorate, and the calls made by the Council were not heeded by the occupying Power. The 80 Palestinian deaths increased to hundreds, the hundreds of injured became thousands, the destruction became widespread and economic and living conditions severely worsened, thereby endangering the entire region.

For our part, we sent more than 70 letters to the Security Council detailing the situation on the ground and calling for action by the Council. But no decision whatsoever was taken by the Council during that period, which lasted more than a year. Not even a follow-up of its own resolution 1322 (2000) was undertaken.

The Council's inaction was not due to any lack of attempts or willingness on the part of the overwhelming majority of the members of the Council. In fact, many attempts were made to that end. The Council convened five public meetings to consider the situation, and a large number of Member States participated in the debate. Private meetings were also held with leaders of the region, including President Yasser Arafat. Members of the Council's Non-Aligned Movement Caucus repeatedly submitted draft resolutions that were supported by other members, as did European members in some cases. But concrete action was never taken.

A draft resolution was put to the vote but was not adopted because it did not receive the necessary majority of votes — after a permanent member said it would cast a veto if there were such a majority. Public threats to use the veto on any similar draft resolution were made on two occasions by that same permanent member, and an actual veto was cast on 27 March.

Thus the Security Council was unable to shoulder its responsibilities with regard to this specific situation due to the negative stance of a permanent member of the Council, and due also, I might add, to the unwillingness of a few members to confront that permanent member, irrespective of their position on the issue. One might call that situation a case of compounded veto, in which the Council is prevented from taking action not only by the use of the veto but also by the threat of the use of the veto.

At any rate, what happened in the Council was tantamount to a suspension of the relevant provisions of the Charter in order to shield one State, in this case the occupying Power, from the relevant provisions of international law, the will of the international community and the Council's own resolutions.

One might wonder here why lofty principles and values stop at our borders, and why international law ceases to function where our situation is concerned. If the Security Council is not willing to redress the situation, then what kind of message is being given to our people, who are under occupation?

Let me also say that all of the above is true, irrespective of how one or another party would describe the situation on the ground. The fact remains that an explosive situation posing a great and grave threat to international peace and security was allowed to exist for more than a year without the Council's taking any decision.

All of this pertains to the situation on the ground, and, in this respect, over the years the record of the Security Council has been mixed. Twenty-five resolutions have been adopted; none were implemented by the occupying Power. Twenty-five drafts were vetoed, needless to say, by that same permanent member.

Concerning the overall situation in the Middle East and the need to establish peace in the region, the record is clear. The situation has been beyond the reach of the Security Council. In fact, the last time the Council dealt with the situation in the region and its political aspects was in 1967 — 34 years ago — when

it adopted resolution 242 (1967), which remains the basis of the current Middle East peace process. The only exception to this might have been the reaffirmation of that resolution in 1973 and the presidential statement made prior to the adoption of Security Council resolution 681 (1990) on 20 December 1990. Nothing serious can justify this sort of extremely unusual behaviour by the Council, in clear disregard of its own responsibility and of the Charter of the United Nations. It is incomprehensible that continued attempts are being made to completely hamstring the Council with respect to the extremely important conflict in the Middle East, and even more so when it comes to the situation on the ground and the need to put an end to death and destruction.

We call on all members of the Assembly — including members of the Security Council — to rectify this situation.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.